

**Coordination Between the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education State Approving Agency and Apprenticeship Carolina™ for Registered Apprenticeship Establishments**

*(Information report prepared for Committee on Access & Equity and Student Services on May 12, 2015)*

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs Transition Assistance Program (DVATAP) at Beaufort Marine Corps Air Station, a South Carolina military installation, service members of the United States Armed Forces are returning home looking for employment to supplement their income from the military (Beaufort Marine Corps Air Station, September 18, 2014). Veterans Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33), Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB-AD/Chapter 30), Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR/Chapter 1606), Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP/Chapter 1607) and Survivors and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (DEA/Chapter 35), who have selected the option of using their GI Bill educational benefits to obtain a vocational objective can do so if their employers participate in the Apprenticeship (APP) or On-the-Job training (OJT) programs approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). APP and OJT programs also provide an opportunity for veterans to earn a stipend from the VA and also earn wages from the employer while they learn a vocational skill. Entitlements that are used in the APP and OJT programs, licensure and certifications are subtracted from the GI Bill educational benefits.

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education State Approving Agency (CHE SAA) staff met with Mr. Brad R. Neese, Director of Apprenticeship Carolina™, on February 20, 2015 to discuss a possible collaboration between Apprenticeship Carolina™ and the CHE SAA. Apprenticeship Carolina™ is a division of the South Carolina Technical College System that provides technical assistance to employers in South Carolina to become registered apprenticeship establishments. During the February 20, 2015 meeting, the CHE SAA staff provided information to Mr. Neese and apprenticeship SC staff about the requirements for employers to become approved as a registered apprenticeship facility to offer veterans education and training to their veteran employees.

In addition, on February 26, 2015, the [State Approving Agency](#) participated in the first Operation Palmetto Employment (OPE) Summit. OPE is a statewide initiative launched by Governor Nikki Haley and supported by the SC National Guard and the SC Department of Employment and Workforce, and is committed to helping SC service members, family members and veterans find meaningful civilian careers. The OPE Summit provided information on how to seek and why should they hire veterans. For more information on OPE, please visit the website address listed below:

[https://www.google.com/?gws\\_rd=ssl#q=operation+palmetto+employment.](https://www.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl#q=operation+palmetto+employment)

As a follow up to the February 20<sup>th</sup> and February 26<sup>th</sup> meetings, Apprenticeship Carolina™ and the CHE SAA staff met on March 18, 2015. The purpose of this meeting was to involve additional key stakeholders including Ms. Julie Harden, South Carolina Department of Veterans Affairs Education Liaison Representative (ELR), Mr. Marlin Bodison, Veteran Services Director for the Department of Employment and Workforce and Mr. John Govan, SC National Guard Employment Services. During the meeting on March 18, 2015, these agency representatives provided an overview of the services that are provided to the employers and veterans in South Carolina. Further, the intent of this meeting was to focus on establishing communication, learn the functions of each agency and how to interconnect our services to companies that hire veterans, identify what should be discussed when implementing an APP program and to provide information about the SAA's and the Department of Veterans Affairs' (DVA) approval processes for employers to become approved registered apprenticeship

establishments under Title 38 CFR 21.4261. The following representatives provided information regarding their agency's functions:

Mr. Frank Myers - Function/Role of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education State Approving Agency:

- The SAA approves programs where veterans and those eligible for VA education benefits (under Title 38, US Code, Chapters 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, and Title 10 US Code, Chapter 1606 and 1607) can achieve quality training in either an educational, professional, or vocational objective.
- The focus of the SAA is the review, evaluation, and approval of quality programs under both the State and Federal criteria.
- The SAA provides technical assistance to employers developing training programs and with the approval process to ensure the organization meets both state and federal criteria under Title 38 CFR 21.4261 and 21.4262 (Exhibit A).
- Note: Apprenticeship programs can run from six (6) months to five (5) years. OJT programs can run from six (6) months to 24 months.

Ms. Julie Harden - Function/Role of the Department of Veterans Affairs as an Education Liaison Representative:

- Reviews and approves (disapproves if warranted) all approval documents submitted by the State Approving Agency to ensure the approval criteria was met under Title 38 CFR
- Approves federal programs for the GI Bill educational program.
- Conducts compliance survey and technical assistance visits at approved colleges, universities, apprenticeship and on-the-job training establishments.
- Note: A brochure was disseminated which included information regarding education benefits available to veterans and the type of programs the education benefit can cover.

Ms. Teri Luther - Function/Role of Apprenticeship Carolina™:

- Apprenticeship Carolina™ is housed within the SC Technical College System Office.
- Apprenticeship Carolina™ will create the apprenticeship program for the employer, prepare paperwork for approval by the Department of Labor, and provides technical assistance after approval.
- Approved apprenticeship companies that have registered apprenticeships receive a \$1,000 South Carolina tax credit every year up to four years.

Mr. Marlin Bodison - Function/Role of the Department of Employment and Workforce:

- An overview was provided regarding jobs for Veterans State Grants which has two mandated programs:
  - The Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists provide intensive services to veterans with significant barriers to employment;
  - The Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) conducts employer outreach and job development in the local community.
- The Department of Employment and Workforce are mandated to leverage other programs that serve veterans.
- The Department of Employment and Workforce representatives travels to all regions of the state and meets with business services teams to inform them of the services that are provided by the LVERS, Apprenticeship Carolina™ and Operation Palmetto Employment.

Mr. John Govan - Function/Role of the South Carolina National Guard Employment Services (SCNGES):

- Employment Advisors for SCNGES Advisors work as individual case managers, assigned per statewide region to help unemployed Service and Family Members find and pursue the right career.
- The first point of contact for resume review and interviewing skills, job fairs and hiring events, access to relevant education and workforce training benefits, and more - see more at: <http://www.scguard.com/smfc/employment-services/#sthash.u3FXtZhu.dpuf>.

The March 18, 2015 meeting led the [CHE SAA staff](#) to coordinate efforts with Apprenticeship Carolina™ to ensure all registered apprenticeship establishments are well informed of the CHE SAA and DVAs' approval processes for participating in veterans' education and training. Creating a partnership with Apprenticeship Carolina™ and with other agencies will expedite the request for approval to the ELR and will also help veterans who are eligible to receive their GI Bill benefits.

All participants representing South Carolina agencies that approve apprenticeships and OJT programs agreed to meet at least once per quarter to discuss best practices for assisting veterans and to provide an update on newly assigned registered apprenticeship employers approved to offer veterans education and training.